



## Ten Minutes with Annabel Bronner Reid

### ***Where did you grow up?***

I was born in Hamilton in Victoria, but grew up in Canberra. I've also lived in Brisbane, Wellington in New Zealand, Melbourne and now Sydney.

### ***What is your dance background?***

I trained with Janet Karin in Canberra and then did two years full time dance at QUT (Queensland University of Technology). I then joined the Royal New Zealand Ballet for two and a half years. We did a lot of local touring and really diverse repertoire, everything from Killian and Balanchine to dancing on skis! I especially loved working with New Zealand's talented choreographers like Douglas Wright and Shona McCullough (who did all the fight scenes for Xena on TV!).

Halfway through 1999 I joined the Australian Ballet – it was nice to come home. I danced there for seven and a half years working with amazing choreographers and performing both classical favourites and contemporary repertoire and lots of touring. Some favourite roles were performing the Baroness in *Swan Lake*, Carabosse in *Sleeping Beauty*, everything in the Jiri Killian triple bills and Stephen Baynes' *Unspoken Dialogues*.

### ***What was a highlight of your dance career?***

Performing *Unspoken Dialogues* with Steven Heathcote in London for the Royal Ballet's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary was an amazing experience. Another favourite moment was performing Le Corsaire grand pas de deux with Mathew Laurence at the Meyer Music Bowl, in front of thousands of people at the Telstra Dancer of the Year Award. Performing outside is a wonderful feeling and the audience is always so rowdy and appreciative – I love it!

### ***What is your current position?***

I now work for Bloch International in product development which includes product testing, marketing and assisting with apparel. I was fortunate to develop a strong relationship with Bloch through their research in dance shoes, in particular, ballet shoes.

I still do a little bit of dancing here and there when I have time.

### ***What prompted you to make the move away from dance?***

A few reasons; I have danced since I was four and I felt I eventually had to let it go and try other things. I think it's healthy for mind and body to challenge yourself in new ways. The body doesn't last forever, I sustained a back injury for years, and the sacrifice of living away from my husband Lee was becoming too much.

### ***Was there any forward planning? If so, what were the benefits?***

Dance is an all consuming passion so it's very hard to plan ahead – the schedules are more than rigorous and it's frightening to front up to the change when dance is all you know. Whilst dancing, I would always say yes to any opportunities to increase my skills other than dance – for example I planned and created an exhibition evening for charity with friends which taught us a lot. I also represented the dancers for union negotiations, which gave me insight into the workings of a company and negotiating skills and I tested product for Bloch which helped me find my current position. It's not until you've made the scary transition away from dance that you realise the skills you do have and how appreciated your dedication and work ethic are.

### ***In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?***

I'm happy with the dancing career I've had and feel fortunate that I could pursue what I loved. If I could change anything, I would have given myself a longer break between retiring from dancing and my new job. You don't realise just how tired you are until you stop and you need some time doing very little to think about the next step.

**How is it now?**

I'm very very busy!! I like to be involved in a lot of different projects and love having weekends to myself. I miss performing onstage sometimes, but I love the upsides to not touring and training all the time – Friday night means relaxing not going back into work. I've always wanted to have a dog but couldn't bear leaving it behind on tour, and now have two beautiful border collies!

**What do you see as the benefits of the dance network?**

I tried to actively network whilst dancing as I didn't know what the next step would be, but wanted to cultivate as many opportunities as possible. My current job at Bloch, grew from a relationship with the company where I tested product and gave feedback on product on a regular basis, so I would definitely recommend forming relationships with people in industries that interest you. Dance gives you great access to a variety of people from many different industries.

**What tip would you give someone just starting out?**

Dance because you love it – it's a hard job to do if you're doing it for other reasons. Faith in yourself, determination and hard work count for a lot.